

W.O.D. NOVEMBER 2007

11-30-07 agitron

Ryan Evans told me this is a word made up by Mort Walker of "Beetle Bailey" fame, meaning wiggle-line, drawn to indicate a shaking object. Walker invented and published a whole Lexicon of Comicana, which I am enjoying to no end. Lucafleets. Grawlives. Plewds. Oh my!

11-29-07 tsar

from Darcy Duke

When I was a kid and was reading lots of fairy-tales, the Russian ones often had this word, which I pronounced "tess-ar." It's still my preferred pronunciation.

11-28-07 the

from Raphe Matto

my favorite word is "the." I like it because everyone uses it all THE time & it doesn't make any sense.

11-27-07 yesterday

this word is quite useful when you skip a day, or your computer breaks down ;-)

11-26-07 pashmina

heard this goat-related word on the boat this morning. I think I will start using it as a nickname for my cat. Here Pashmina!

11-25-07 smidgen

from Tim Nihoff

Most people use "smidgen" very loosely, but the definition is so technical--1/32 of a teaspoon--that manufacturers actually make a measuring spoon for "a smidgen."

11-24-07 bombastic

I can not even believe this word has negative connotations--negative definition really. It means "pompous" or "pretentious" "overly self-important." I think it should mean "bombdiggity!" or "the bomb," but there go those sneaky words again! It always makes me think of Shaggy, the reggae dj, singing "Boombastic! Mr. Fantastic!"

11-23-07 wiseacre

from Ryan Evans

One of my favorite words is 'wiseacre', but you know what word really bugs me? 'nuclear'. I can never pronounce it correctly. Does that make me a republican?

11-22-07 irridiculous

from "The Lisa Factor"

IRRIDICULOUS (adj.): to be silly with abandon, i.e., without regard for the consequences. "My brother said I was being irridiculous when I told his daughter to draw a magic marker smiley face on his head while he was sleeping."

I like this word because I made it.

11-21-07 horehound

Karen asked me what this herb word was. We both cracked up and couldn't stop using it! We think its licorice sassafrassy. (and sassy).

11-20-07 miscreant

from Carol Cartier

villain, as in everyone Wilhelmina will get to sooner or later [Fr, rel. to MIS-, creant believer]

11-19-07 muligatawny

I found this word recently alone on a post-it on my friend's desk. I can only guess it was a lunch order, or wish.

My mom used to make muligatawny soup with green apples in it, for special occasions, such as pumpkin carving and gingerbread-cookie-baking parties. The Tamil, millagu thanni, means 'pepper water.' But I think it also fits the words "mull" and tawny." It tastes like mulled spice and looks like a lion-color. Perfect for November.

11-18-07 kerfuffle

from Lisa Usani Phillips

(of the Lisa Factor)

I like just about any word that begins with "ker" and "kerfuffle" conjures the cute, furry ruckus that two kittens might make as they wrestle each other for supremacy.

11-17-07 doyenne

from Miriam Goodman

Partly because I don't know what it really means - partly because it conjures a picture of a painting - by who? Lady with black velvet choker in balcony of the theater -is it a chaperone? Or a rich young lady? and I like the way it sounds

11-16-07 clafouti

from Christine halter

I like it because it sounds like a nonsense word. Clafouti. What an awkward mouthful. Who would think it is a custardy homespun dessert? I have a recipe for clafouti with fresh figs. You warm some honey with cinnamon, roll the fig halves in it and then dump on the custard. It's so delicious, and I wish I had not thought of it just now!

11-15-07 tautology

from Cindy Weisbart

A favorite word: tautology. Because it is a GRAND word that can be used in SIMPLE places, making its usage both ironic and accurate and, therefore, pleasing.

11-14-07 articulate

from Tova Goodman

I used to really like the word 'milk' because of the way it rolls off the tongue. It made me think of a nice, creamy, solid patch of color. But I'm not so in love with it anymore. Most likely because I've become more lactose intolerant as I've gotten older, and because it sounds like the way your throat feels when you drink it. The 'k' is too phlgem-y. Now I'm starting to enjoy the word 'articulate.' 1. because you are required to do what it means in order to say it and 2. because it's far superior to the word 'eloquent,' with which I often confuse it. My brain is typically drawn to use 'eloquent' first but it never fills out a sentence quite so well. It's too regal for me.

11-13-07 potto

from Kitty Martin

One word I like is potto.

I like the potto

a lot-o.

Whenever I see the word (which admittedly isn't often) I picture a potto and immediately want to go to the zoo.

11-12-07 luminous

from Ann

today I like "luminous"--because the world feels luminous with the sunlight coming through the falling yellow leaves

11-11-07 spelunking

from Lisa Ericson

“spelunking! I have a study carrel in the back of the classroom. When they want to go under it and read, my students ask if they may enter the cave. That got us talking about people who really seek out checking out caves—spelunkers!”

11-10-07 persnickety
from Lisa Usani Phillips of “The Lisa factor”
“persnickerpotamus
hilarity
bumptious”

11-09-07 fewer
from Tom Morse
My current word of fascination is the word fewer. And I mourn its passing as I hear more and more people use it less and less. The epidemic of tying “less” instead of “fewer” to a noun, (e.g., less things to go wrong), betrays the entropic nature of American English. This first came to the fore for me when Les Otten’s Sunday River Ski Area ran billboard advertisements that read, “More Snow. Less Lines.” Worth noting: the locals paraphrased this as “More snow, Les Otten. Fewer lines” is always preferable when writing, just as fewer lines are always preferable when skiing -- and sometimes when writing, too. (Although shorter lines would have been best of all.)
But, as our language grows less and less robust, fewer and fewer people seem to care. (Your 6:15 AM, second deck, port, aft, ferry riding companions notwithstanding.)

11-08-07 caterwauling
from Teel Rubin
What would the world be like without words? Let's pile them up...I'll send you just one, just because I like its sound, when it's said trippingly on the tongue... caterwauling (the sound that cats make when they're amorous.)
NOTE FROM SG: I told Mason, who's 10, that caterwauling “sounds like what it means.” Then I asked him to guess what it means. He guessed “Throwing cats at a wall.” So, be careful with “caterwauling.” Never use it the wrong way.

11-07-07 preposterous
from Holly Hartman
I like the word preposterous, b/c it sounds like a wonderful dinosaur and it's one of those four-syllable words that feels kind of good to say.

11-06-07 cynosure vs. sinecure

from Jane Kogan

And now to the burning question of the evening (so far as I was concerned: cynosure v. sinecure.

Well, Miriam gave the right definition of cynosure, of which the dictionary says: an object that serves as a focal point of attention and admiration.

That wasn't at all what I meant when castigating the director of the community center for doing nothing and not even opening the building anywhere near like on time.

Sinecure now, with its 2 definitions: 1) An ecclesiastic benefice not attached to the spiritual duties of the parish, and 2) An office, commission, or charge that requires no work yet provides compensation. That #2: I couldn't have said it better myself. In fact it is exactly what I meant when I did say it."

11-05-07 brocade

from Frankie Wright

Word of the moment for me: brocade.

It can last a very long time in the saying.

Love's transience we stroked into brocade, images and words in our pattern, and then swooped high the whole of it and snapped away its intricacy; how the elements fell, what dustings withstood the sun, what mattered to the eye, foretold our future. "

11-04-07 layzhy

Layzhy came from Marilyn Monroe singing "Lazy." Tim Nihoff, likes this word today because "It's Sunday. It's time to fall back."

Or, as Marilyn said it, "I'm languid . . . I'm supine. . . . Mentally, I'm comatose. . . . I'm layzhy."

In Irving Berlin's 1954 musical, There's No Business Like Show Business, Marilyn translated Berlin's song "Lazy" into her own, dragging out the sounds and layering them with laziness until they became a way of gasping for breath.

11-03-07 wa

Wa is a Japanese word, that Bear, a Gordon setter, used to say.

He said "Wa" in moments of quiet.

My friend Tom took a class in Japanese.

He taught me wa means harmony.

Babies say "Wa" a lot, but it does not sound like harmony.